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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
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Agenda item 12

RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

Cuba, Israel and Senegal (on behalf of the African group):
draft resolution

1998/.. Recognition of slavery and the slave trade
as a crime against humanity

The Commission on Human Rights,

Considering the provisions of the Slavery Convention of 1926 and the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery of 1956,

Bearing in mind article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 8 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which state that no one shall be held in slavery or servitude,

Concerned by the gross violation of human rights and crimes committed against the African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora as a result of slavery and the slave trade, particularly the trans-Atlantic slave trade,

Taking into account the long years of exploitation of Africa through the trans-Atlantic slave trade for the benefit of international commerce, especially in Europe and America,

Conscious of the long-term socio-economic, cultural and political impact of the long years of slavery and the slave trade,

Noting that the slave trade, particularly the trans-Atlantic slave trade, strongly contributed to the scourge of racism and reinforced and entrenched racial prejudices and other related intolerance which continue to haunt the international community today,

Recognizing that while slavery has occurred throughout history in various parts of the world, the trans-Atlantic slave trade was particularly horrendous and flagrant in its magnitude, large-scale commercial nature and effect on the African peoples,

Welcoming the fact that other peoples who were subjected to lesser or similar scourges and injustices have received apologies, compensation and reparations,

Mindful of the moral obligation to remember the injustices arising from slavery and the slave trade, especially the trans-Atlantic slave trade, as a gross violation of human rights,

Convinced that African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora deserve apologies for the injustices committed against them through centuries of slavery and the slave trade,

Convinced also that the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides an auspicious occasion for the international community to consider this matter,

1. Recognizes the fact that slavery and the slave trade constitute a gross and flagrant violation of human rights against the African peoples and a crime against humanity;

2. Welcomes the Slave Route Project started by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as outlined in resolution 29 C/5 adopted by the General Conference of the organization in November 1997;

3. Calls upon the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to address, in the context of its Slave Route Project, the question of slavery and the slave trade, giving urgent priority to and placing particular emphasis on the examination of the extent of the injustices occasioned by slavery and the slave trade, notably the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and, in this regard, focusing particular attention on the modalities of slavery and the slave trade, clarifying the short- and long-term consequences

on the African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora and clearly establishing the benefits accrued by those who were involved, as well as the extent of injury of the victims of slavery and the slave trade;

4. Requests the Special Rapporteur on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance to establish a close liaison with those involved in the research programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and to report on the progress of the research to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session, providing an in-depth assessment of and recommendations on the findings of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the subject from a human rights perspective and advising on how the findings can be utilized to facilitate the bridging of the racial divide spawned by slavery and the slave trade, leading to the realization of a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence between races and peoples;

5. Calls upon all States as well as relevant international organizations and bodies to provide maximum cooperation to the researchers of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the Special Rapporteur in carrying out their duties, and upon the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that the Special Rapporteur is provided with all the resources he may require, as a matter of priority, for the expeditious discharge of his mandate;

6. Requests those who, directly or indirectly, by commission or omission, participated, permitted, facilitated or tolerated slavery and the slave trade in particular the trans-Atlantic slave trade, to consider apologizing to the African peoples concerned as a first step in the process of healing the wounds arising from slavery and the slave trade;

7. Decides to remain seized of this matter at its fifty-fifth session under the same agenda item.